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FOR ACTION

COUNTRY PROGRAMME RECOMMENDATION**

Nicaragua

Addendum

SUMMARY

The present addendum to the country note submitted to the Executive Board at its first regular session in January 1996 contains the final country programme recommendation for Board approval.

It contains a recommendation for funding the country programme of Nicaragua which has an annual planning level of $1,000,000 or less. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve the amount of $5,000,000 from general resources, subject to the availability of funds, and $18,000,000 in supplementary funds, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 1997 to 2001.

* E/ICEF/1996/18.

** The original country note provided only indicative figures for estimated programme cooperation. The figures provided in the present addendum are final and take into account unspent balances of programme cooperation at the end of 1995. They will be contained in the "Summary of 1996 recommendations for general resources and supplementary funding programmes" (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.43/Add.2).

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BASIC DATA
(1994 unless otherwise stated)

Child population (millions, 0-15 years)	2.09
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	68
IMR (per 1,000 live births)	49
Underweight (% moderate and severe) (1993)	12
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births) (1990)	160
Literacy (% male/female) (1995)	65/67
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female) (1993)	79/81
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%) (1993)	55
Access to safe water (%)	53
Access to health services (%) (1985)	83
GNP per capita	$330
One-year-olds fully immunized against:	
tuberculosis:	89 per cent
diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus:	74 per cent
measles:	74 per cent
poliomyelitis:	84 per cent
Pregnant women immunized against:	
tetanus:	..

THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN

1. The country note for Nicaragua presented to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 1996 (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.25) stressed that despite economic constraints, social indicators have improved and there are important signs of hope. Following years of armed conflict, the country is still grappling with a process of economic recovery, political reconciliation and democratization, and a new Government is scheduled to be elected in October 1996.

2. Economic, cultural, gender and regional disparities still persist, especially in the Central, Northern and Atlantic regions. For example, infant and maternal mortality rates vary significantly from region to region and there are high primary school grade repetition rates. Major causes of infant and child mortality are diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infections (ARI) and perinatal causes. HIV/AIDS, abuse of children and women due to intra-family violence, child labour, institutionalization, drug addiction, prostitution and increasing numbers of children in conflict with the law are emerging problems.

3. Nicaragua presented its first report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1994. The main recommendations of the Committee were taken into account in the preparation of the draft Child and Adolescent Code, which is expected to be approved in 1996.

PROGRAMME OF COOPERATION 1992-1996

4. During the period 1992-1996, programme objectives were met in general and, in some cases, surpassed. Evaluations of the health, water and sanitation and integrated basic services programmes were carried out, in addition to the multi-donor evaluation and the mid-term review. Their recommendations, and especially the concerns of the multi-donor evaluation team about gender and the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), were taken into consideration and plans adjusted accordingly. Interventions were aimed at strengthening national capacities to achieve the goals of the national programme of action (NPA) within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Direct support was provided to formulate social policies and to strengthen institutions, coordination mechanisms and methodologies to focus on and defend the rights and needs of children and women.

5. The country's decentralization policy was supported through the health and nutrition, water and sanitation, and integrated basic services programmes which focused on capacity-building and community empowerment. Support also was received from the Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean. Extensive gender training was provided to raise awareness of and progressively reduce gender disparities. Communication activities enhanced social awareness about children's and women's rights. Coordination between governmental institutions, NGOs and other actors from civil society was strengthened. Inter-agency coordination also was reinforced, especially with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/World Health Organization in the health programme and with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for surveys on living standards and poverty.

Lessons learned

6. The strategies for capacity-building and community empowerment have been most effective at the subnational level and should be pursued further to reinforce the Government's decentralization policy. However, the geographic scope of these interventions should be reduced to facilitate convergence and impact of activities. Gender sensitization and gender-sensitive social policies should be strengthened, as should the link between the NPA goals, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in order to promote equity and reinforce the democratization process and human rights approach.

7. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on strengthening information systems to monitor the situation of children and improve mobilization activities. In the water and sanitation programme, a more integral approach to community development and links between sectors and programmes should be established, giving more emphasis to the hygiene education component. Initiatives to enhance children's right to participation should be promoted, as appropriate, in different parts of the country programme, giving children opportunities to express their opinions in the programming process and implementation of activities. Another important lesson learned is that sustainability can be achieved through community empowerment and a balanced interaction between government and civil society with high levels of participation.

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMME OF COOPERATION, 1997-2001

Estimated annual expenditure

(In thousands of United States dollars)

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
General resources						
Children's and women's rights	250	265	292	283	270	1 360
Health and nutrition	160	160	180	250	250	1 000
Education	250	314	312	243	249	1 368
Integrated basic services	194	120	70	70	70	524
Programme support	146	141	146	154	161	748
Subtotal	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	5 000
Supplementary funds						
Children's and women's rights	500	920	880	400	300	3 000
Health and nutrition	1 350	1 350	650	575	575	4 500
Education	250	400	500	450	400	2 000
Integrated basic services	1 200	1 950	2 050	1 800	1 500	8 500
Subtotal	3 300	4 620	4 080	3 225	2 775	18 000
Total	4 300	5 620	5 080	4 225	3 775	23 000

8. Programme preparation began in 1995 with the situation analysis and a series of consultations with the Government. The exercise considered the recommendations of the mid-term review, which was carried out with national governmental partners and the non-governmental sector. The draft country note was presented to the Social Cabinet, and to major donors in August 1995. Government organizations and NGOs participated in the preparation of the master plan of operations and other documents. The proposed country programme was discussed with representatives of United Nations agencies and donors in March 1996, and also took into account comments made by the Executive Board on the country note. The process included consultations with the United Nations system and 10 representatives of main donors.

9. Nicaragua has an NPA to achieve the goals of the World Summit for Children and is implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These commitments are closely linked to the country's Social Policy which aims to: (a) prioritize the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population; and (b) improve the efficiency and effectiveness of basic services through decentralization, the participation of civil society, coordination and improved management. The main goals of the NPA, developed using government data in 1990, are: (a) to reduce the infant mortality rate from 72 to 55 per 1,000 live births; (b) to reduce the under-five mortality rate from 81 to 61 per 1,000 live births; (c) to reduce the maternal mortality rate from 160 to less than 80 per 100,000 live births; (d) the virtual elimination of vitamin A and iodine deficiencies; (e) to increase to 50 per cent the proportion of children

completing primary school; (f) to increase water and sanitation coverage to 98 per cent in urban areas and 50 per cent in rural areas; and (g) to improve attention to children with special protection needs. The NPA will be revised during 1996 to adapt the current goals to those agreed upon by Nicaragua at the World Summit for Children and as expressed in the Nariño Accord.

10. The programme of cooperation for 1997-2001 will support the country in achieving these national goals with the following objectives: (a) to increase public awareness and understanding of the two Conventions and support the legislative, institutional and policy adaptations required for the protection of children's and women's rights; (b) to reduce infant and child deaths due to diarrhoea, ARI and perinatal causes; (c) to improve the quality of maternal health care and reduce maternal mortality ; (d) to improve the control of micronutrient deficiencies; (e) to reduce grade repetition and drop-out rates, especially in the first years of primary school; and (f) to increase water supply and sanitation services in underserved rural and marginal urban areas.

11. The programme will be implemented at national and local levels. Based on lessons learned, priority will be given to strengthening capacities at the national level to improve quality and coverage of services, and at the local level to plan and implement services, including non-institutional ones, with greater community and NGO participation. Community empowerment will be linked to service delivery interventions to increase access and sustainability. Social communication and mobilization, gender mainstreaming and monitoring and evaluation will be cross-cutting strategies. This approach also is reflected in the distribution of funds according to activities, with 50 per cent of the total budget being devoted to technical assistance, institutional development and training. In order to reduce the dispersion of activities and facilitate mutually reinforcing interventions, there will only be four programmes.

Children's and women's rights

12. This programme will advocate and support the legislative, institutional and policy adaptations required for protecting children's and women's rights, with an emphasis on the reduction of gender disparities. It also will contribute to the massive dissemination of information on the two Conventions, the Public Policy for Children and the Child and Adolescent Code, as well as information on women's and children's conditions. Capacity-building, advocacy and mobilization are the main strategies. Technical assistance will be provided for legislative reforms, particularly in the areas of child labour and children in conflict with the law; the establishment of a Child Rights Ombudsman; and for defining and implementing advanced methodologies related to the care of children with special protection needs. Demonstrative activities will be executed to validate methodologies.

13. Surveys to provide better information on child prostitution, child labour and children in conflict with the law will be carried out, and a system to monitor the implementation of the two Conventions and the NPA goals will be supported in coordination with other partners. Gender training of government and NGO personnel will be supported, as will follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. Activities will be carried out in cooperation with other United Nations agencies and relevant donors, especially the Nordic countries, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the European Union, all of which are supporting the democratization process.

14. UNICEF will support public forums to raise awareness of children's and women's conditions, rights and needs, and to promote resource mobilization and the coordination of government institutions, NGOs and civil society in facing specific problems. General resources will support the implementation of the Child and Adolescent Code, public policy, legislative reforms and monitoring of the implementation of the two Conventions and the NPA. Other actions will depend upon the availability of supplementary funds.

Health and nutrition

15. This programme will pursue the rights of children and women to adequate health care. It will contribute to the reduction of infant, child and maternal mortality through the achievement of the decade goals. Social mobilization, capacity-building, empowerment for community participation and inter-institutional cooperation will be the key strategies. The programme will be implemented in coordination with PAHO, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and selected NGOs.

16. The programme will comprise two projects: support to primary health care (PHC); and support to the local integrated health care systems. Through PHC, UNICEF will collaborate with the Ministry of Health to strengthen surveillance of polio, measles and neonatal tetanus and to increase the demand for routine vaccination. Technical support will be provided for the expansion of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, to certify all major hospitals and 60 per cent of health centres. UNICEF, with support from the subregional micro-nutrient initiative, will contribute to the control of micronutrient deficiencies by advocating the fortification of salt, sugar and flours with iodine, vitamin A and iron by the local food industry, and through social communication to stimulate consumer demand. General resources will be used for social communication activities, and supplementary funds received through the subregional programme will support food fortification feasibility tests, advocacy and monitoring of micronutrient levels in fortified foodstuffs.

17. The integrated health care systems project will operate in seven departments where basic epidemiological and operational research will be promoted for goal monitoring at the local level. Training and supplies will be provided for nurses and community health workers to improve the coverage and quality of correct case management of ARI, diarrhoeal diseases and women's health care. Given the high rate of adolescent pregnancy and its association with maternal mortality, the project will address this problem through universal access to information on the prevention of high-risk pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, focusing on the adolescent girl. The project will support service delivery and offer technical assistance to "maternal houses", stressing the improvement of their monitoring systems. These activities will be prioritized in Matagalpa, where maternal mortality is above the national average. The project as a whole will be implemented with supplementary funding.

Education

18. This programme will address the right of boys and girls to a basic education and will contribute to reducing drop-out and grade repetition rates, especially in the first year of primary school. The programme has two projects: policy and communication; and basic education. The former will generate social demand for better education, strengthen public commitments to

expand and improve the quality of basic education, and promote resource mobilization and the establishment of intersectoral institutional linkages. It will promote public debate and encourage the creation of committees and working groups of professionals and representatives from civil society for implementing a general education law and basic education policies.

19. The basic education project will emphasize strengthening national capacities for effective training, the improvement of teaching practices and the design and transformation of learning. Didactic materials for school children and out-of-school youth (working children) will incorporate learning and life skills such as health, environment, gender equity and children's rights. In coordination with the integrated basic services programme, activities will be developed at the municipal level, based on concrete, cost-effective demonstrative experiences in clusters of multigrade schools and with out-of-school children. They will be evaluated to influence national education policies. Learning materials will be tested and evaluated at the local level. The 2,500 promoters of the Nicaraguan Fund for Children and the Family and NGOs working at the community level will receive didactic materials and training.

20. Strengthening the institutional capacity to implement innovative teaching methods and educational policies, together with social communication, will be the main strategies. General resources will be oriented to supporting policy formulation, communication activities, curricular reforms and the design of training materials. Extensive training activities and expansion to the local level will be supported through supplementary funding.

Integrated basic services

21. Lessons learned from the integrated basic services and water and environmental sanitation components of the previous country programme have provided the basis for the design of this programme, which will be implemented in 42 municipalities, with an expected beneficiary population of 400,000 people. Objectives are to: (a) assist in the formulation of municipal plans for the social development of children, adolescents and women; and (b) contribute to improving the coverage, efficiency and effectiveness of basic services in health, education, nutrition, water and sanitation, and for children with special protection needs. The programme will consist of three projects: (a) formulation of policy and social plans; (b) development of decentralized services; and (c) water and environmental sanitation. Institutional capacity-building, community empowerment and, to a lesser extent, service delivery will be the strategies.

22. The first two projects will support the decentralization process, with an intersectoral approach, and enhance the improvement of services at family and community levels. Municipal commissions for children will be established and municipal plans of action formulated. Training and technical assistance will be provided to develop social management capacities and strengthen community networks, to systematize successful case studies and to promote the exchange of experiences. Support will be given to train about 4,000 community leaders, local health workers and midwives, gender facilitators, promoters and voluntary teachers in health, education and the care of children in need of special protection.

23. The water and environmental sanitation project has been planned within the framework of the subregional programme. It will help to: (a) strengthen planning, implementing and monitoring of systems at the central level and in the

30 municipalities; (b) enhance intersectoral coordination; (c) empower communities to plan for, implement and sustain facilities (2,000 water systems and 14,000 latrines); (d) establish 2,000 water and sanitation committees; (e) mobilize local resources; (f) promote behavioural changes in personal and environmental hygiene; and (g) accelerate the sustainable increase of rural water supply and sanitation coverage. As a result, water supply coverage is expected to increase to 80 per cent and sanitation coverage to 75 per cent in the selected municipalities. The project will benefit from subregional exchanges of experience and expertise among the Central American countries. General resources allocated to this programme will be used for institutional capacity-building and planning at the municipal level. Supplementary funds will be needed to improve the quality and coverage of services and to ensure interventions in all municipalities.

Fund-raising strategies

24. The Nordic countries have been a major source of funding in recent years. Efforts will be made to sustain and broaden the source of funds through increased dialogue with donors at the local level. Periodic meetings with donors will be held, and high-quality information materials on successful UNICEF-supported experiences will be produced and distributed. Efforts also will be made to mobilize more resources from the private sector at the local level. Increasing sales of greeting cards will be a priority.

Monitoring and evaluation

25. Every programme and project includes specific monitoring mechanisms, including verifiable indicators to monitor results and enhance the decision-making process. Applying the lessons learned, continuing emphasis will be placed on monitoring of cost-effectiveness. Surveys will be carried out and methodologies such as sentinel sites will be implemented to assess the impact of interventions. Efforts will be made to strengthen national capacities to set in place a monitoring system for compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, there will be comprehensive annual and mid-term reviews with the participation of all partners.

Collaboration with other agencies

26. The proposed programme complements the country strategy note, which is currently under preparation. The Ministry of External Cooperation will be in charge of coordinating the country programme. There will be close collaboration with PAHO, UNFPA, the United States Agency for International Development and Rotary International in health and nutrition; with UNDP in human development at the local level; with the World Bank and IDB in the areas of water, sanitation, education and health; with the International Labour Organisation in child labour; and with the Swedish International Development Authority in water, sanitation and local development.

Programme management

27. The proposed programme and corresponding UNICEF office structure are designed to improve efficiency and accountability, and reflect a balanced and integrated utilization of the existing fields of expertise within the UNICEF office. A qualitative approach, with sound technical assistance and a consistent search for improved performance, will shape the management style.

TABLE

LINKAGE OF PROGRAMME BUDGET AND STAFFING/STAFF COSTS

COUNTRY : NICARAGUA
PROGRAMME : 1997-2001

PROGRAMME SECTION/AREAS AND FUNDING SOURCE	PROGRAMME BUDGET (In thousands of US dollars)				POSTS a/										STAFF COSTS b/ (In thousands of US dollars)		
	GR	FSF	NSF	TOTAL	D2/L7	D1/L6	P/L5	P/L4	P/L3	P/L2	IP	NP	GS	TOTAL	IP	LOCAL	TOTAL
GENERAL RESOURCES :																	
CHILDREN'S AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS	1,360			1,360	0	0	0	0.3	0	0	0.3	0	0	0.3	230.6	0.0	230.6
EDUCATION	1,368			1,368	0	0	0	0.7	0	0	0.7	0	0	0.7	461.1	0.0	461.1
HEALTH AND NUTRITION	1,000			1,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
INTEGRATED BASIC SERVICES	524			524	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PROGRAMME SUPPORT	748			748	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0.0	338.5	338.5
TOTAL GR	5,000			5,000	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	4	691.7	338.5	1,030.2
SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING :																	
CHILDREN'S AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS		0	3,000	3,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
EDUCATION		0	2,000	2,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
HEALTH AND NUTRITION		0	4,500	4,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	127.7	315.9	443.6
INTEGRATED BASIC SERVICES		0	8,500	8,500	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1.1	6	8.1	691.7	617.3	1,309.0
PROGRAMME SUPPORT		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL SF		0	18,000	18,000	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2.1	8	11.1	819.4	933.2	1,752.6
TOTAL GR & SF	5,000	0	18,000	23,000	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	3.1	10	15.1	1,511.1	1,271.7	2,782.8
ADM. & PROGRAMME SUPPORT BUDGET	Operating costs			1,266.9													
	Staffing				0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	6	10	1,685.8	1,194.3	2,880.1
GRAND TOTAL (GR+SF+ADM)					0	0	1	3	0	0	4	5.1	16	25.1	3,196.9	2,466.0	5,662.9
Number of posts and staff costs:																	
Current programme cycle											6	3	18	27			
At the end of proposed programme cycle (indicative only)											4	5.1	16	25.1	3,196.9	2,466.0	5,662.9

GR = general resources.
SF = supplementary funding.
FSF = funded supplementary funding.
NSF = new supplementary funding.
IP = international Professional.
NP = national Professional.
GS = General Service.
ADM = administrative.

a/ Each post, regardless of its funding source, supports the country programme as a whole.
b/ Exclude temporary assistance and overtime; include costs of United Nations volunteers.